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Item 114 (b) of the preliminary list*
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 2 May 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement of the European Union on the occasion of the granting of autonomous trade preferences to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, issued on 30 April 1997.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 114 (b) of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) N. H. BIEGMAN
Permanent Representative of the
Netherlands to the United Nations

* A/52/50.

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ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

Statement of the European Union on the occasion of the granting of autonomous trade preferences to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, issued on 30 April 1997

The Council has decided to extend autonomous trade preferences to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for the year 1997.

With this measure, the European Union is responding to developments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Although no formal dialogue between Government and opposition parties has yet started, representatives of both sides have participated in televised debates. The media scene is more diverse than before the November elections. The Serbian Government has removed a number of the most unwelcome elements from the second draft of its media law and has undertaken to produce a new federal law relating to State television.

At the same time, the European Union has taken note of the difficulties encountered by the economy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Continued economic decline in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia affects in particular the population and could therefore also undermine stability across the region.

The decision to extend autonomous trade preferences has been taken against the background of the need to promote economic revival and to reinforce a trend towards democratization, and has been supported by the Zajedno opposition. This is the only basis on which the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia can hope to build internal stability and a productive relationship with the European Union. It is clear that there is room for improvement on both scores.

The European Union, therefore, expects the full and speedy implementation of the Gonzalez report. This includes acceptance of the facilitation by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe of dialogue between Government and opposition and the start of a dialogue, a further improvement of the draft media law as well as reform of the electoral law and independent operation of the judicial system. In the absence of progress by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia towards meeting these criteria, the decision on granting autonomous trade preferences will be reviewed.

In addition, the European Union expects from Belgrade substantial progress on the issue of Kosovo, a continued positive attitude towards Eastern Slavonia and continued implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace. This includes the relations of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with the Republika Srpska.

The Council today adopted conclusions on the application of conditionality for relations with the countries of the region. Further development of relations with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will be based on these conclusions.